THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Plastics material is used in the following applications in the agriculture which are being promoted through Centrally Sponsored Schemes:

- Drip irrigation
- Sprinkler irrigation
- Green house/Low Tunnels
- Mulching
- Plastic Crates

The above applications helps in achieving increase in yields, water saving, better quality produce, raising crops in extreme climatic conditions. The use of plastic crates for carrying fruits & vegetables not only facilities transportation while maintaining the quality of produce but also saves forests to a larger extent which would have been otherwise cut to produce wooden boxes to carry fruits & vegetables.

(b) Plastics materials have been developed as an alternative to limited conventional resources viz wood, paper, jute etc. as well as for ecological balance and environment protection. Studies have been carried out to produce biodegradable plastic material for use in agriculture applications viz mulching. However, such material is costlier than the conventional plastic material.

Gram Panchayat as unit under crop insurance scheme

†2588. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the farmers of the country have requested Government to consider Gram Panchayat as unit instead of Block under crop insurance scheme so that farmers could get insurance on damage of crops in entire Panchayat, due to natural calamity;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government in this regard and the outcome thereof; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Farmers and Implementing States have requested from time to time to reduce the unit area of insurance to Village or Gram Panchayat level so as to make more realistic assessment of crop loss and compensation under National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS).

The Joint Group constituted by the Government of India to study the improvements required in the existing crop insurance schemes has examined this issue and have recommended 'Gram Panchayat' as unit area of insurance for major crops. The Government is consulting various Stakeholders regarding implementation of the recommendations of the Group.

National Horticulture Mission

2589. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the aims and objectives of the National Horticulture Mission;

(b) the details of areas that have been identified in Andhra Pradesh which are regionally different from others for cluster approach and for the development of horticulture crops in the State;

(c) the difference between Technology Mission for integrated development to Horticulture and NHM;

(d) the total allocation made for NHM in the Tenth Plan for Andhra Pradesh; and

(e) the targets set for National Horticulture Mission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) The main objectives of the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) are:

(i) To provide holistic growth of the horticulture sector through an area based regionally differentiated strategies which include research, technology promotion, extension, post harvest management,